

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 00320 130924Z  
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13  
DHA-02 ACDA-07 /077 W  
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P R 130855Z JAN 77  
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1490  
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT PFOR SOPH KS KN US  
SUBJ: KOREAN PRESS REACTION TO PRESIDENT PARK'S NEWS CONFERENCE

REF: SEOUL 0278 (DTG 120820Z JAN 77)

SUMMARY: ROK PRESS HAVE UNIFORMLY SUPPORTED PRESIDENT PAK'S ANNUAL PRESS CONFERENCE REMARKS WHICH GIVEN HEADLINE PLAY IN NEWS REPORTS. SEVERAL HAVE NOTED ABSENCE REMARKS ON DOMESTIC POLITICAL MATTERS, INCLUDING HUMAN RIGHTS. END SUMMARY.

1. ON JANUARY 12 OR 13, ALL KOREAN NEWSPAPERS DEVOTED HEADLINES AND TOP STORIES TO PRESIDENT PAK'S NEW YEAR'S PRESS CONFERENCE. TOP BILLING WAS GIVEN TO PAK'S RENEWED SUGGESTION OF NON-AGGRESSION PACT BETWEEN ROK AND NORTH KOREA (NK), AND TO HIS STATEMENT THAT ROK PREPARED, ON PURELY HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS, TO EXTEND FOOD GRAIN AID TO NK. ALL PAPERS RAN SUMMARY OF SPEECH ON INSIDE PAGES.

2. PAPERS ALSO NOTED POLITICAL PARTIES' STATEMENTS. DRP AND  
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YUJONG-HOE SUPPORTED PAK'S DETERMINATION TO ACHIEVE PROSPERITY, UNIFICATION, AND PEACE AND NOTED THAT SPEECH HAD "SET NATIONAL OBJECTIVES FOR THIS YEAR." NDP ALSO SUPPORTED PAK'S "AMBITION" FOR SELF-RELIANT DEFENSE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, BUT NOTED THAT HE HAD FAILED TO COMMENT ON POLITICAL PROBLEMS, ESPECIALLY FREE PRESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES. THIS POINT ALSO MADE TO DCM BY YUJONG-HOE ASSEMBLYMAN RO CHIN HWAN WHO ADDED SPECULATION THAT

OMISSION OF OR MENTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS INDICATED PRESIDENT WAS ACTIVELY CONSIDERING QUESTION AND DID NOT WANT TO DISCUSS IT NOW. SOME OF EMBASSY'S CHRISTIAN SOURCES HAVE ALSO NOTED LACK OF REFERENCE TO DOMESTIC POLITICS IN PAK'S ADDRESS BUT ADDED NO COMMENT AS TO MEANING OF OMISSION.

3. EDITORIAL COMMENT WAS UNIFORMLY FAVORABLE, COMMENTING ON SELF-CONFIDENCE PAK EXPRESSED AND BRIGHT PICTURE OF FUTURE OF ROK PAINTED IN ADDRESS (PARTICULARLY FOR 1981, ON COMPLETION OF FOURTH 5-YEAR PLAN). TONGA ILBO COMMENTED THAT, TO ACHIEVE ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY, AN EPOCH-MAKING INCREASE IN SAVINGS WILL BE NECESSARY.

4. WHILE MOST EDITS SAW NON-AGGRESSION PACT/TROOP WITHDRAWAL LINKAGE AND AID OFFER TO NK SIMPLY AS REASONABLE STEPS TOWARD INSURING PEACE, INTERESTING COMMENTARY APPEARED IN "FOCUS," FRONT-PAGE COLUMN OF ANALYSIS IN TONGA ILBO. REPORTER CHONG CHONG-MUN NOTED THAT "SOME THINK, THOUGH GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES DENY IT, THAT THERE MIGHT BE AN INDICATION (IN PRESIDENT'S REMARKS) OF A PRUDENT CHANGE OF POSITION FROM THE FORMER UNCONDITIONAL OPPOSITION TO WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. TROOPS. IN VIEW OF HIGH TIDE OF UNPLEASANT FEELING IN IMPORTANT QUARTERS IN KOREA TOWARD THE VARIOUS SORTS OF DISCUSSION IN U.S. ABOUT U.S. TROOPS IN KOREA, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE ADVENT OF CARTER ADMINISTRATION, PAK'S STATEMENT MAY BE A RESPONSE TO THIS, SOME HOLD." CHONG LEAVES READER HANGING HOWEVER AS TO JUST WHAT MESSAGE PRESIDENT PAK IS SENDING TO U.S.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009